



SESSION

3

Baptism and temptation



MEETING AIM

To understand Jesus' baptism and temptation at the beginning of his ministry.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 3:1-4:13



BACKGROUND

The passage in Luke 3:1-4:13 gives us the introduction to John the Baptist and then to Jesus at the start of his ministry. It covers a lot of ground in one passage. This session tries different ways of making sense of this passage, partly by giving the group tools to read and understand difficult Bible passages. This session starts with the theme of baptism, looks at the passage as a whole and ends with the theme of temptation.

+ GATHERING TIME



As the group arrives, share out your refreshments and ask them to share funny stories of getting wet. Has anyone fallen in a pond? Have you ever been soaked in a water fight? Has anyone ever gone in the sea or a swimming pool with their clothes on?

+ GAME



You will need: paper; pens; stopwatch

Split the group into pairs and give them three minutes to come up with as many uses for water as they can in a written list.

Time them and after three minutes make them stop listing. Ask each pair to go through their lists. For every unique suggestion the group makes (ie suggestions that other pairs haven't got) they get 20 points. For every suggestion that other pairs have got, they get five points. And for every suggestion that is too similar to a suggestion they have already made (such as 'washing a car' and 'washing a bike') they get minus ten points!

Add the points up at the end and declare the winners! You may want to have a small prize ready for the winners.

Explain that the link is between water and baptism, where today you're exploring a passage that includes John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism.

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: printouts of the passage for each person; highlighter pens; pens

This activity might work more for the introverts and readers in the group, so bear in mind that others may struggle to concentrate, but you'll probably be able to anticipate who they are! You may need to position yourself to be on hand to help some young people engage with the activity. Explain that this passage covers a lot of ground in a short amount of time.

Invite the group to take a printed version of the passage, a highlighter and a pen to make notes or questions. Say: Sometimes when we read the Bible, it can be difficult for us to understand because it was written originally in a different language and for a time and context very different to ours. Though that can put us off reading the Bible, recognising the difficult bits and taking notes can be a way of helping us understand the passage better."

Ask the group to individually read the passage and use the highlighter and pen to make notes of things that are surprising, interesting, confusing, or that they have questions about. Then ask them to gather in pairs or small clusters to discuss what they picked out and how to make sense of these different parts. (You could do this in smaller groups if this will help reluctant readers.)

Spend some time discussing the questions that the group came up with. There may be some overlap with that discussion and the 'Chatting together' questions, but use them in a way that enables the group to further unpack the story.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the group these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- Why were some people drawn to John the Baptist and others offended by him?
- What was the act of baptism for?
- Why do you think Jesus was baptised?
- What's the story of Jesus' temptation telling us?
- Why did Jesus fast for 40 days?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: 12 large sheets of paper; pens and pencils

Arrange the 12 sheets of paper in a 3x4 grid on the floor. The larger the squares of paper the better, as this will increase the dramatic effect. A4 would work if you have little time to prepare or limited floor space. On the back, write different sections of the passage split into twelve: Luke 3:1-6; Luke 3:7-9; Luke 3:10-14; Luke 3:15; Luke 3:16-18; Luke 3:19-20; Luke 3:21-22; Luke 3:23-38; Luke 4:1-2; Luke 4:3-4; Luke 4:5-8; Luke 4:9-13.

Explain that each sheet is a part of the passage that will need to be made into a freeze frame of a comic book (you could show a comic book as an example). Depending on your group size, ask individuals or pairs to take one or several sheets with the passages on the back and give them ten to 20 minutes (depending on time) to draw and write these comic book freeze frames. As people work, chat more about the passage and their response to it.

When the time is up, invite the group to piece the grid back together and enjoy the effect of the joint effort comic book strip of this passage.

+ PRAYER



Explain that we all get tempted, just as Jesus was. In many ways, we can be strengthened by the knowledge that Jesus was tempted like us, but we also know that we are forgiven by Jesus when we give in to temptation.

Another way of being encouraged to avoid temptations is by supporting each other. Ask the group to get into pairs or small clusters. If they're comfortable to, invite them to share the things that tempt them the most, and ask the pairs and clusters to encourage and pray for each other in these areas of temptation.